Poetry
A Magazine of Verse
Edited by Harriet Monroe
October, 1917
5th Birthday Number
Poems by Masters, Benét, Lindsay, and Wm. Butler Yeats

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The liveliest art in America today is poetry, and the liveliest expression of that art is in this little Chicago monthly.

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POETRY asks its friends to become Supporting Subscribers by paying ten dollars a year to its Fund. The magazine began under a five-year endowment which expired Sept. 30th, 1917; and although the endowment has been partly resubscribed for another period, this Fund is insufficient and expenses are constantly increasing. The art of poetry requires, if it is to advance, not only special sympathy from a discriminating public, but also endowment similar to that readily granted to the other arts. All who believe in the general purpose and policy of this magazine, and recognize the need and value of such an organ of the art, are invited to assist thus in maintaining it.
HOW beautiful are the bodies of men—
   The agonists!
Their hearts beat deep as a brazen gong
For their strength's behests.
Their arms are lithe as a seasoned thong
In games or tests—
When they run or box or swim the long
Sea-wave crests
With their slender legs, and their hips so strong,
And their rounded chests.

I know a youth who raises his arms
Over his head.
He laughs and stretches and flouts alarms
Of flood or fire.

[1]
POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

He springs renewed from a lusty bed
To his youth's desire.
He drowses, for April flames outspread
In his soul's attire.

The strength of men is for husbandry
Of woman's flesh:
Worker, soldier, magistrate
Of city or realm;
Artist, builder, wrestling Fate
Lest it overwhelm
The brood or the race, or the cherished state.
They sing at the helm
When the waters roar and the waves are great,
And the gale is fresh.

There are two miracles, women and men—
Yea, four there be:
A woman's flesh, and the strength of a man,
And God's decree,
And a babe from the womb in a little span
Ere the month be ten.
Their rapturous arms entwine and cling
In the depths of night;
He hunts for her face for his wondering,
And her eyes are bright.
A woman's flesh is soil, but the spring
Is man's delight.

[2]
SONG OF WOMEN

How beautiful is the flesh of women—
Their throats, their breasts!
My wonder is a flame which burns,
A flame which rests;
It is a flame which no wind turns,
And a flame which quests.

I know a woman who has red lips,
Like coals which are fanned.
Her throat is tied narcissus, it dips
From her white-rose chin.
Her throat curves like a cloud to the land
Where her breasts begin—
I close my eyes when I put my hand
On her breast's white skin.

The flesh of woman is like the sky
When bare is the moon:
Rhythm of backs, hollow of necks,
And sea-shell loins.
I know a woman whose splendors vex
Where the flesh joins—
A slope of light and a circumflex
Of clefts and coigns.
She thrills like the air when silence wrecks
An ended tune.
These are things not made by hands in the earth:
Water and fire,
The air of heaven, and springs afresh,
And love’s desire.
And a thing not made is a woman’s flesh,
Sorrow and mirth!
She tightens the strings on the lyric lyre,
And she drips the wine.
Her breasts bud out as pink and nesh
As buds on the vine:
For fire and water and air are flesh,
And love is the shrine.

SONG OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

How beautiful is the human spirit
In its vase of clay!
It takes no thought of the chary dole
Of the light of day.
It labors and loves as it were a soul
Whom the gods repay
With length of life and a golden goal
At the end of the way.

There are souls I know who arch a dome,
And tunnel a hill.
They chisel in marble and fashion in chrome,
And measure the sky.
They find the good and destroy the ill,
And they bend and ply
The laws of nature out of a will
While the fates deny.

I wonder and worship the human spirit
When I behold
Numbers and symbols, and how they reach
Through steel and gold;
A harp, a battle-ship, thought and speech,
And an hour foretold.
It ponders its nature to turn and teach,
And itself to mould.

The human spirit is God, no doubt,
In flesh made the word:
Jesus, Beethoven and Raphael,
And the souls who heard
Beyond the rim of the world the swell
Of an ocean stirred
By a Power on the waters inscrutable.
There are souls who gird
Their loins in faith that the world is well,
In a faith unblurred.
How beautiful is the human spirit—
The flesh made the word!

Edgar Lee Masters

[5]
THE PRICE

What is it you buy with so much blood
And so much sorrow?
A thing but darkly understood—
We buy Tomorrow.

Why is it you sow with blasting flame
To reap with passion?
When was it then that a good thing came
In an easy fashion?

Have you not also fallen and sinned?
You are sin to the marrow!
We are but as straws that show the wind,
As blades to the harrow.

Iniquity, iniquity,
Though much befriended,
Yet it shall perish utterly;
It shall be ended!

Do you see then an end of wars,
An end of weeping?
We see the reticent ranks of stars
Shine on our sleeping.
We hear the great earth sigh and turn,
   And the seas sighing;
And the angry sunsets flame and burn
   With old dreams dying.

But earlier than the early dawn,
   So chill, so grayly,
Comes that which never is withdrawn,
   Comes to us daily,

Comes to us, after every mood
   Of pain or passion—
The certitude, the certitude
   Of what we fashion!

Are you so devout, who never trod
   'Neath spire or steeple?
But we have spoken with our God,
   The God of the People.

Our blood the dye, his robe the sod
   That we lie under;
We have heard the still voice of our God
   Through flame and thunder.

What are these wild words of some change
   You bring to being?
We only know it shall be strange
   Beyond foreseeing!
We have lain down, we have stood up
(Past all dissembling!)
With Death, with Death. We have quaffed the cup,
The cup of trembling.

So we but whisper brokenly,
As dead men do,
The great strange things that are to be,
That shall come true.

For we are blinded, and we see;
Deaf, and have ears;
Despoiled, and co-heirs perfectly
Of coming years.

Life higher than we ever thought,
Deeper than death—
This with our life-blood we have bought,
With our vain breath.

Over fire-curtained slime of the fen,
Through insensate clamor,
We have heard the building thoughts of men
Hammer and hammer.

We have heard the splitting of codes apart,
The ripping of glamour
Like colored curtains, and Man's strong heart
Hammer and hammer.
We have heard the sledges of a state
   Beyond our hoping
Thunder and thunder. We are great
   Who once were groping.

Out of the slag and fume of the pit
   We have seen uprearing
A blinding witness; because of it
   We are done with fearing.

Out of the bowels of Hell-on-earth
   We have seen upstraining
A winged archangel of rebirth
   Too strong for chaining.

Now ours is the strength, ours is the might—
   Yea, by these powers,
Ours is the earth for light and right,
   And the future ours,

Who have rent our hearts, our blood outpoured,
   Who have drunk all sorrow,
Who have found our strength, walked with our Lord,
   And bought Tomorrow!

William Rose Benét
Leaves whirl about my feet;
Leaves, leaves dance over my head—
Brown leaves.
And their madness and love of death blow through my heart.
(Oh, the perfume of these drifting golden leaves!)

What wine can stain the soul with redder glory
Than this wild, sudden thirst for sudden death?

They rise like clouds of incense
From swift-swinging golden censers—
Clouds and clouds!
And the western sky is a glow of light
As yellow and white as the face of a Christian saint.

Autumn, autumn!
I will not live!
I'll go now, now, with all my memories and my joys.

I will not live
To have them blown
Like ashes from an altar by capricious winds.
UP IN THE HILLS

The earth smells old and warm and mellow, and all things lie at peace.
I too serenely lie here under the white-oak tree, and know the splendid flight of hours all blue and gay, sun-drenched and still.
The dogs chase rabbits through the hazel-brush; I hear now close at hand their eager cries, now swift receding into the distance, leaving a-trail behind them in the clear sweet air shrill bursts of joy.
There's something almost drowsy in that waning clamor; It brings the stillness nearer and a sense of being bodily at one with the old warm earth, Blessedly at one with the fragrant laughing sun-baked earth, At one with its sly delightful wicked old laughter.

CAN THIS BE ALL?

Can this be all? Can this unfinished thing be called complete, And I be left to face it thus forever, Forever to twist and turn, remould and tint anew?

ARTIST

Bird, whose eyes I cannot see, Whose flight is beautiful, From your wings in passing Bright plumage is drifting down to us.
MUSIC

The house is still.
The very pictures on the walls have lost their painted meaning.
The place seems new and strangely vacant.
I see the old brown Chinese figure in the panel facing me;
he has a look of stupid blankness that is utterly new.
The three big dogs asleep here at my feet—
What cabalistic word will be required to rouse them from their almost deathlike slumbers?
So still—so still the house—
My heart so still.
And I might lift my head and speak and move about and change all this,
But that I know what thing has made it so;
Whose absence the place can feel,
Whose voice is heard no more.
And I think of the great free-sounding melodies that filled the room—
Great silhouettes that passed—
And clear full living tones that live no longer.

This is the lifeless vacuum left by the passage of the storm.

FOREWARNED

What have I to do with the world?
What has the world to do with me—
Who know now that in the end I must have traffic
Only with the things of my own spirit.

PROPHETS

Prophet of joy!
Before ever the deed lived, you came.

Be the fulfilment what it was,
I do prostrate myself for love and lay here at your feet my heart of thanks.

Prophet of evil!
It is now your hour!

A VOICE BREAKS IN UPON THE SILENCE

Swiftly,
Secretly,
Silently,
Winding through some unsensed aerial channel,
With subtle solace and challenging, it comes—
Suddenly I know that it is there:
"Alert—Alert—Arise!"

Whatever the day bring forth, that will I greet—
Having drunk divinely, divinely, of the dawn!

Helen Louise Birch
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

THE SOAP-BOX

"This my song is made for Kerensky."

O market square, O slattern place,
Is glory in your slack disgrace?
Plump quack doctors sell their pills,
Gentle grafters sell brass watches,
Silly anarchists yell their ills.
Shall we be as weird as these—
In the breezes nod and wheeze?

Heaven's mass is sung,
Tomorrow's mass is sung
In a spirit tongue
By wind and dust and birds:
The high mass of liberty,
While wave the banners red,
Sung round the soap-box—
A mass for soldiers dead.

When you leave your faction in the once-loved hall,
Like a true American tongue-lash them all;
Stand then on the corner under starry skies,
And get you a gang of the worn and the wise.
The soldiers of the Lord may be squeaky when they rally,
The soldiers of the Lord are a queer little army;
But the soldiers of the Lord, before the year is through,
Will gather the whole nation, recruit all creation,
To smite the hosts abhorred and all the heavens renew;
Enforcing with the bayonet the thing the ages teach—
Free speech!
Free speech!

Down with the Prussians, and all their works!
Down with the Turks!
Down with every army that fights against the soap-box—
The Pericles, Socrates, Diogenes soap-box,
The old-Elijah, Jeremiah, John-the-Baptist soap-box,
The Rousseau, Mirabeau, Danton soap-box,
The Karl-Marx, Henry-George, Woodrow-Wilson soap-box.
We will make the wide earth safe for the soap-box,
The everlasting foe of beastliness and tyranny,
Platform of liberty—Magna Charta liberty,
Andrew Jackson liberty, bleeding-Kansas liberty,
New-born Russian liberty:
Battleship of thought, the round world over,
Loved by the red-hearted,
Loved by the broken-hearted,
Fair young amazon or proud tough rover;
Loved by the lion,
Loved by the lion,
Loved by the lion!—
Feared by the fox.

Death at the bedstead of every Kaiser knocks.
The Hohenzollern army shall be felled like the ox.
The fatal hour is striking in all the doomsday clocks;
The while, by freedom's alchemy,
Beauty is born.
Ring every sleigh-bell, ring every church bell,
Blow the clear trumpet and listen for the answer—
The blast from the sky of the Gabriel horn.
Hail the Russian picture around the little box:
Exiles,
Troops in files,
Generals in uniform,
Mujiks in their smocks,
And holy maiden soldiers who have cut away their locks.

All the people of the world, little folk and great,
Are tramping through the Russian Soul as through a city gate,
As though it were a street of stars that paves the shadowy deep;
And mighty Tolstoi leads the van along the stairway steep.

But now the people shout:
"Hail to Kerensky—he hurled the tyrants out!"
And this my song is made for Kerensky,
Prophet of the world-wide intolerable hope—
There on the soap-box, seasoned, dauntless,
There amid the Russian celestial kaleidoscope,
Flags of liberty, rags and battlesmoke.

Moscow!—Chicago!
Come let us praise battling Kerensky!
Bravo! bravo!—
Comrade Kerensky, thunderstorm and rainbow,
Comrade Kerensky, bravo, bravo!
HOW SAMSON BORE AWAY THE GATES OF GAZA

A Negro Sermon

Once, in a night as black as ink,
She drove him out when he would not drink.
Round the house there were men in wait
Asleep in rows by the Gaza gate.
But the Holy Spirit was in this man.
Like a gentle wind he crept and ran.
(“It is midnight,” said the big town clock.)

He lifted the gates up, post and lock.
The hole in the wall was high and wide
When he bore away old Gaza’s pride
Into the deep of the night:
The bold Jack-Johnson Israelite—
Samson, the Judge, the Nazarite.

The air was black, like the smoke of a dragon.
Samson’s heart was as big as a wagon.
He sang like a shining golden fountain;
He sweated up to the top of the mountain.
He threw down the gates with a noise like judgment.
And the quails all ran with the big arousalment.

But he wept: “I must not love tough queens,
And spend on them my hard-earned means.
I told that girl I would drink no more.
Therefore she drove me from her door.
Oh, sorrow,
Sorrow,
I cannot hide!
O Lord, look down from your chariot side!
You made me Judge, and I am not wise;
I am weak as a sheep for all my size."

Let Samson
Be coming
Into your mind.

The moon shone out, the stars were gay—
He saw the foxes run and play.
He rent his garments, he rolled around
In deep repentance on the ground.

Then he felt a honey in his soul;
Grace abounding made him whole.
Then he saw the Lord in a chariot blue.
The gorgeous stallions whinnied and flew;
The iron wheels hummed an old hymn-tune
And crunched in thunder over the moon.
And Samson shouted to the sky:
"My Lord, my Lord is riding high."
Like a steed, he pawed the gates with his hoof;
He rattled the gates like rocks on the roof,
And danced in the night
On the mountain-top;
Danced in the deep of the night—
The Judge, the holy Nazarite,
Whom ropes and chains could never bind.
Let Samson
Be coming
Into your mind.

Whirling his arms, like a top he sped;
His long black hair flew around his head
Like an outstretched net of silky cord,
Like a wheel of the chariot of the Lord.

Let Samson
Be coming
Into your mind.

Samson saw the sun anew.
He left the gates in the grass and dew.
He went to a county-seat a-nigh,
Found a harlot proud and high,
Philistine that no man could tame—
Delilah was her lady-name.
Oh, sorrow,
Sorrow—
She was too wise!
She cut off his hair,
She put out his eyes.

Let Samson
Be coming
Into your mind.

Vachel Lindsay
HROLF'S THRALL—HIS SONG

There be five things to a man's desire:
Kine flesh, roof-tree, his own fire,
Clean cup of sweet wine from goat's hide,
And through dark night one to lie beside.

Four things poor and homely be:
Hearth-fire, white cheese, own roof-tree,
True mead slow brewed with brown malt;
But a good woman is savor and salt.

Plow, shove deep through gray loam;
Hack, sword, hack for straw-thatch home;
Guard, buckler, guard both beast and human;
God, send true man his true woman!

DIFFERENCE

There was one who hated,
Then came to comprehend.
It is too late—I do not care
How very low he bend.

There was one who loved me—
I paid the punctual debt.
I cannot quite remember,
      Yet cannot quite forget.

There was one I died for
      Several years ago:
How helpless seems a summer nest
      Drifted full of snow!

A SONG OF NO CONSEQUENCE

This too delicious burden,
      This too persistent urge,
This aching and this beauty,
      And the answer of her breast:
This is her glowing guerdon,
      And this my utter rest.

Take loveliness and wonder,
      Take splendor and take pain,
Clean lightning and brave thunder,
      The silver slant of rain,
And one white flower thereunder
      That lifts her face again.

Love, love, love, love—
The morning star is slain.

[21]
HEAVEN

Ah God, that love should be
   Another road to pain,
And beauty as it blossoms
   By its own terror slain!

Still—if death were not
   Another way to love,
There were little need of heaven
   That sages whisper of.

THE BUILDER

Smoothing a cypress beam
   With a scarred hand
I saw a carpenter
   In a far land.

Down past the flat roofs
   Poured the white sun;
But still he bent his back,
   The patient one.

And I paused surprised
   In that queer place
To find an old man
   With a haunting face.

[22]
"Who art thou, carpenter
Of the bowed head;
And what buildest thou?"
"Heaven," he said.

DING DONG BELL

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust—
Lords and ladies and loves and lust,
Gray old mothers in the sun,
Men grown listless when work is done—
Ashes to ashes, the folded tent,
The pitcher shattered, the wonder spent.

Ashes to ashes, dust and rest—
Blazoned glory, but sleep is best.
Once there was clinging and a white breast small,
But lying alone is best of all.
Overhead the dead stars sweep—
Night and ashes, dust and sleep.

Willard Wattles
TO A PORTRAIT OF WHISTLER IN THE BROOKLYN ART MUSEUM

What waspish whim of Fate
   Was this that bade you here
Hold dim, unhonored state,
   No single courtier near?

Is there, of all who pass,
   No choice, discerning few
To poise the ribboned glass
   And gaze enwrapt on you?

Sword-soul that from its sheath
   Laughed leaping to the fray,
How calmly underneath
   Goes Brooklyn on her way!

Quite heedless of that smile—
   Half-devil and half-god,
Your quite unequalled style,
   The airy heights you trod.

Ah, could you from earth's breast
   Come back to take the air,
What matter here for jest
   Most exquisite and rare!

But since you may not come,
   Since silence holds you fast,
Since all your quips are dumb
And all your laughter past—
I give you mine instead,
And something with it too
That Brooklyn leaves unsaid—
Your meed of homage due.
Ah, Prince, you smile again—
"My faith, the court is small!"
I know, dear James—but then
It's I or none at all!

WHISTLER'S WHITE GIRL

She heard the whisper of the stars,
She heard the falling of the dew,
And all the untrod virgin ways
Of Beauty's self she knew.
And when the moon lay silver-white
Along the meadows and the streams,
She walked across the night to him
Upon a bridge of dreams.
And as upon his eyelids there,
She shone so wonder-white to see,
What could he give her more or less
Than immortality?

Eleanor Rogers Cox
I wish I were old now,
   And maybe content:
I'd look back the long way
   My footsteps were bent,
And say, " 'Tis all done now—
   What odds how it went?"

For all would look smooth then
   And most would look gay;
And "Oh, I was sure then
   And strong then," I'd say,
And show the wild young things
   My wise-travelled way.

I'd have naught to strive for
   And no thoughts to form,
But how to rest easy
   And how to sleep warm,
And "Pity the poor souls
   Abroad in the storm!"

I wish I were old now
   With living put by,
And peace on the hearthstone
And peace in the sky.
But "Oh, to be young now,
But young now!" they cry!

VAIN HIDING

I said, "I shall find peace now, for my love has never been
Here in the little room, in the quiet place;
The walls shall not quiver around me, nor fires begin,
And I shall forget his voice and perhaps his face,
And be still for a little space."

But the thought of my love beat wild against the silencing
doors
There in the quivering air, in the throbbing room,
Till his step strode quick and light against the echoing floors,
And the light of his voice was there for the placid gloom
And his presence a shed perfume.

So I said, "There is no peace more, for the place can never be
Where the thought of him cannot come, cannot burn me through,
For the thought of his touch is my flesh, and his voice is a
voice in me,
And what is the use of all you may say and do
When love is a part of you?"
I did not know that I should miss you,
So silver-soft your loving came—
There were no trumpets down the dawning,
There were no leaping tides of flame:

Only a peace like still rain falling
On a tired land with drought foredone,
Only a warmth like light soft lying
On a shut place that had not sun.

I did not know that I should miss you . . .
I only miss you, day and night,
Stilly, as earth would miss the rainfall;
Always, as earth would miss the light.

PRESCIENCE

I went to sleep smiling,
I wakened despairing—
Where was my soul,
On what terror-path faring?
What thing shall befall me
By midnight or noon?—
What does my soul know
That I shall know soon?

Margaret Widdemer
On the grey sand beside the shallow stream,
Under your old wind-beaten tower, where still
A lamp burns on beside the open book
That Michael Robartes left, you walk in the moon;
And though you have passed the best of life still trace,
Enthralled by the unconquerable delusion,
Magical shapes.

By the help of an image
I call to my own opposite, summon all
That I have handled least, least looked upon.

And I would find myself and not an image.

That is our modern hope, and by its light
We have lit upon the gentle, sensitive mind
And lost the old nonchalance of the hand.
Whether we have chosen chisel, pen or brush
We are but critics, or but half create,
Timid, entangled, empty and abashed,
Lacking the countenance of our friends.
Hic

And yet
The chief imagination of Christendom
Dante Alighieri so utterly found himself
That he has made that hollow face of his
More plain to the mind's eye than any face
But that of Christ.

Ille

And did he find himself,
Or was the hunger that had made it hollow
A hunger for the apple on the bough
Most out of reach? and is that spectral image
The man that Lapo and that Guido knew?
I think he fashioned from his opposite
An image that might have been a stony face,
Staring upon a bedouin's horse-hair roof
From doored and windowed cliff, or half upturned
Among the coarse grass and the camel dung.
He set his chisel to the hardest stone.
Being mocked by Guido for his lecherous life,
Derided and deriding, driven out
To climb that stair and eat that bitter bread,
He found the unpersuadable justice, he found
The most exalted lady loved by a man.

Hic

Yet surely there are men who have made their art
Out of no tragic war—lovers of life,
Impulsive men that look for happiness
And sing when they have found it.

Ille

No, not sing;
For those that love the world serve it in action,
Grow rich, popular and full of influence,
And should they paint or write still it is action:
The struggle of the fly in marmalade.
The rhetorician would deceive his neighbors,
The sentimentalist himself; while art
Is but a vision of reality.
What portion in the world can the artist have
Who has awakened from the common dream,
But dissipation and despair?

Hic

And yet
No one denies to Keats love of the world.
Remember his deliberate happiness.

Ille

His art is happy, but who knows his mind?
I see a school-boy when I think of him
With face and nose pressed to a sweet-shop window.
For certainly he sank into his grave
His senses and his heart unsatisfied,
And made—being poor, ailing and ignorant,
Shut out from all the luxury of the world,
The ill-bred son of a livery-stable keeper—
Luxuriant song.

Hic

Why should you leave the lamp
Burning alone beside an open book,
And trace these characters upon the sands?
A style is found by sedentary toil
And by the imitation of great masters.

Ille

Because I seek an image not a book,
Those men that in their writings are most wise
Own nothing but their blind, stupified hearts.
I call to the mysterious one who yet
Shall walk the wet sands by the edge of the stream
And look most like me, being indeed my double,
And prove if all imaginable things
The most unlike, being my anti-self,
And standing by these characters disclose
All that I seek; and whisper it as though
He were afraid the birds, who cry aloud
Their momentary cries before it is dawn,
Would carry it away to blasphemous men.

William Butler Yeats
COMMENT

THESE FIVE YEARS

WITH the present number _Poetry_ celebrates its fifth birthday, and begins its eleventh volume and sixth year. The occasion seems appropriate for a few changes, either advisable or necessary. In the former class are the new cover, the inside table of contents, and a few slight typographical differences which our old friends will note. In the latter class are the changes in price and in paper required by the heavily increased cost of all materials and expenses during this period of war.

The present number inaugurates also what might be called the second period of our history, since the magazine began under a five-year endowment which expired with the September number, and will continue, it is hoped, under a second similar endowment of which about two-thirds has been already subscribed. Thus we may have reached the psychological moment for confidential reminiscence and examination of conscience. That searching question, "What hast thou done with thy stewardship?" may well demand an answer. We have assumed to be the organ of a great art, the exhibition-place for its best current products. We have demanded as the poets' right, and spent for their benefit (or at least tried to), over five thousand a year of our guarantors' money, besides a smaller amount from subscribers and advertisers. In so doing we have placed before the people—indeed, we have uttered with a loud voice—the claim of
poetry, and the artists who practice it, to that public recognition of sympathy and financial support which is granted, unquestioningly and in lavish measure, to the other arts.

Five thousand a year may not be much money compared with the millions spent annually in this country for the endowment of painting and sculpture through exhibition space and dates, commissions, prizes and scholarships; and of music through orchestral and operatic associations, music schools, etc. Our prizes—three hundred or so a year—are very small compared with the three thousand given annually at a single exhibition in Pittsburgh, the nineteen hundred in Chicago's autumn exhibition, and similar amounts in other cities. And though scholarships are numerous for promising students in the other arts, and the American Academy at Rome is an over-luxurious endowment for them, no one has yet offered a poet's travelling scholarship, through this magazine or any other, or any university. Still, five thousand a year is a good deal as a starter for any project, and for five years POETRY has been privileged to spend it by way of maintaining its proud demands for the art.

It seemed a good deal to the frugal-minded founder of the magazine, one June day of 1911, when Mr. H. C. Chatfield-Taylor—novelist, historian and enlightened lover of the arts—proposed to her the financial scheme on the basis of which a poets' magazine might be published. I had been saying that the art needed an organ of its own, that the poets got from the ordinary magazines merely page-end spaces and few of those, and from the public merely neglect or ridicule. (Incredible though this seems today, yet so it was!)
"I agree with you," he said, "that the situation is desperate and something must be done. Perhaps it's up to you—if you choose to undertake it, I believe you can get a hundred men and women in Chicago to give fifty dollars a year each for five years. Anyway I'll promise to head the list and do what I can to help you."

So the would-be editor started on an adventure which proved far less formidable than it seemed—less formidable and more interesting. Her office interviews with men prominent in the commercial and professional life of the greatest inland city brought her many an agreeable surprise. She had expected them to laugh at the project, so new and seemingly absurd; on the contrary, most of them received it in the highest spirit of idealism, often giving back her arguments better than she could state them herself. Accustomed to new and hazardous enterprises requiring to the utmost vision and daring, they were not daunted by this little venture for "the Cinderella of the arts," and willingly put their names on its roll of honor. In some cases she left their offices as if on wings, newly inspired for a high purpose; and the whole experience brought home to her the fact that the best and most imaginative minds of the country, through the formative era that may be passing with this war, have gone largely, perhaps chiefly, into big business; nor is this strange when we consider all that had to be done through the formative period of a great continental nation.

Thus the hundred guarantors were secured more easily than anyone had expected, and their loyalty has never wavered. Since one or two critics have printed their sus-

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Picion that POETRY has been run in a spirit of compromise with the (inferred) tastes of its guarantors, this may be the occasion to state emphatically that never, by word or deed, has any guarantor attempted to influence the editorial policy of the magazine. Indeed, they have been, as a rule, over-fearful of seeming to interfere by the expression even of friendly criticism—the editor would have welcomed more opinionating from them than she has ever received. The editorial policy of POETRY, for good or ill, has been the work of its editors, with the occasional assistance of its advisory committee. Its guarantors are guiltless.

The project became public property with the publication of a first-page article in the Chicago *Tribune* one Sunday of November, 1911. We were discovered!—the guarantor list was not complete, but the names were of a number and quality to inspire confidence. Toward the end they rolled in rapidly, and my only regret has been that I did not keep on while the scheme had such momentum, instead of stopping with an hundred names or so. We could use to the advantage of the art more money than we have ever had!

The next point of attack was the poets—I remember wondering, with some misgivings, whether they would respond as gracefully as the guarantors. During the summer of 1912 the following circular, accompanied in some cases by personal letters, was sent to many poets American and English:

*Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,* is to be published for the encouragement of the art. More than one hundred persons have generously pledged subscriptions amounting to five thousand dollars annually for five years to make this experiment possible. Besides this, two hundred and fifty dollars will be awarded in one or two cash
prizes for the best poem or poems published during the first year, and at least one other prize has been partly promised.

The success of this first American effort to encourage the production and appreciation of poetry, as the other arts are encouraged, by endowment, now depends on the poets. We offer them:

First, a chance to be heard in their own place, without the limitations imposed by the popular magazine. In other words, while the ordinary magazines must minister to a large public little interested in poetry, this magazine will appeal to, and it may be hoped, will develop, a public primarily interested in poetry as an art, as the highest, most complete human expression of truth and beauty.

Second, within space limitations imposed at present by the small size of our monthly sheaf—from sixteen to twenty-four pages the size of this—we hope to print poems of greater length and of more intimate and serious character than the other magazines can afford to use. All kinds of verse will be considered—narrative, dramatic, lyric—quality alone being the test of acceptance. Certain numbers may be devoted entirely to a single poem, or a group of poems by one person; except for a few editorial pages of comment and review.

Third, besides the prize or prizes above mentioned, we shall pay contributors. The rate will depend on the subscription list, and will increase as the receipts increase, for this magazine is not intended as a money-maker but as a public-spirited effort to gather together and enlarge the poet's public and to increase his earnings. If we can raise the rate paid for verse until it equals that paid for paintings, etchings, statuary, representing as much ability, time and reputation, we shall feel that we have done something to make it possible for poets to practice their art and be heard. In addition, we should like to secure as many prizes, and as large, as are offered to painters and sculptors at the annual exhibitions in our various cities.

In order that this effort may be recognized as just and necessary, and may develop for this art a responsive public, we ask the poets to send us their best verse. We promise to refuse nothing because it is too good, whatever be the nature of its excellence. We shall read with special interest poems of modern significance, but the most classic subject will not be declined if it reaches a high standard of quality.

We wish to show to an ever-increasing public the best that can be done to-day in English verse. We hope to begin monthly publication in November or December, 1912, at the low subscription rate of $1.50 a year. We ask that writers of verse will be inter-
A kind of declaration of principles and purposes was this circular, and on the whole we think our worst enemy would admit that the magazine has lived up to it. If we have not yet been able to "raise the rate paid for verse until it equals that paid for paintings, etchings, statuary, representing as much ability, time and reputation," that millenial ambition is still ours, and we are ready to fulfil it whenever some miraculous increase in our endowment, subscription list or volume of advertising makes it possible. In one respect we have surpassed that summer's expectations: instead of "from sixteen to twenty-four pages" we now print over fifty.

One of the promptest and most cordial responses came from Ezra Pound, then as now in London. In a long letter of August 18th, 1912, he wrote:

I am interested, and your scheme, so far as I understand it, is not only sound but the only possible method . . .

But?—Can you teach the American poet that poetry is an art, an art with a technique, with media, an art that must be in constant flux—a constant change of manner—if it is to live? Can you teach him that it is not a pentametric echo of the sociological dogma printed in last year's magazines? Maybe—anyhow you have your work before you . . .

If I can be of any use in keeping you or the magazine in touch with whatever is most dynamic in artistic thought, either here or in Paris—as much of it as comes to me, and I do see nearly everyone that matters—I shall be glad to do so.

I send you all that I have in my desk—an over-elaborate "Imagiste" affair, and a note on the Whistler exhibit.

This letter, connecting us up so sympathetically with London and Paris, was received with joy. Mr. Pound was at once appointed foreign correspondent of POETRY, a proud
These Five Years

but unremunerative office which, in spite of volcanic up­heavals now and then, he still holds.

Other poets also welcomed the project with enthusiasm. Mr. Ficke sent us the beautiful double sonnet on Poetry which opened our first number. Miss Amy Lowell, who was just preparing her first book for the press, promised, Sept. 7th, to send us some poems later, adding:

It is a most excellent undertaking, and ought to do much to foster poetry, which has a hard time to get itself published now.

And Mr. Lindsay wrote, Sept. 18th:

Thank you indeed for the invitation to contribute to the new magazine. I am indeed eager to make good with such a group, and three times interested in such an Illinois enterprise.

And six weeks later, Oct. 29th, he sent us General Booth, which led off our fourth number—January, 1913.

By this time Alice Corbin Henderson had assumed the associate editorship of the magazine, so that from the first her brilliant mind, with its high poetic intuition and keen critical sense, was devoted to the project. The connection has been less immediate during the past year, but we hope that Mrs. Henderson's rapidly improving health may enable her soon to resume it. When Mr. Henry B. Fuller, Miss Edith Wyatt and Mr. H. C. Chatfield-Taylor consented to be an advisory committee, the editorial staff was complete.

Those first weeks were a continual excitement. The first episode was the pronunciamento of a Boston rival which, threatening to absorb our title and to begin a month ahead of us, forced us to advance our first number to October. Appearing about September twenty-third, it antedated the
Poetry Journal by nearly two months and made our long-announced title secure.

Soon Mr. Pound sent over some more “imagist” poems—by Richard Aldington and H. D., and that first group from the Gitanjali which made POETRY the first publisher in English of Rabindranath Tagore. Hard upon their appearance, in the December number, came a letter from the great Bengali poet’s son, postmarked “Urbana, Illinois,” and soon the poet himself, whom we had thought of as in India, became a familiar and friendly presence in Chicago.

So it went on—that first winter. William Butler Yeats lent the splendor of his name to our third number, and among the other early arrivals were Joseph Campbell and Ernest Rhys from over seas, and many Americans—Agnes Lee, Mrs. Conkling, Witter Bynner, John Reed, Mr. Torrence, Mr. Sterling, Miss Widdemer, appearing among the thirty-five poets of our first volume—our first half year.

Each successive volume brought its special excitement. Ezra Pound—with Contemporania—and Allen Upward—with his Chinese Scented Leaves—were the most thrilling episodes of the second; Carl Sandburg and D. H. Lawrence of the third, Amy Lowell of the fourth, the War Number and Edgar Lee Masters and Miss Skinner of the fifth; and so on—this must not become a chronicle. There has never been any reason to doubt the response of the poets; with few exceptions they have stood by us loyally even through differences of opinion, and the friendships thus begun have been the editor’s chief reward.
It has been not without misgivings and tremors that we have faced the alternative of bringing POETRY to an end or soliciting a new guaranty fund. Who were we that we should ask a subsidy in these costly days of war? But a wave from the deeps rose to sweep away our doubts. All the more because of war must our fellow-countrymen cherish the arts, and especially this art of the poets, who have been, from the dawn of time, the annunciators of truth, the first revealers of beauty. We can not afford to close our doors to them—who knows what spirit of fire might knock in vain? POETRY may not be a grand enough portal, and the lamps that light it may burn dim in drifting winds; but until a nobler one is built it should stand, and its little lights should show the way as they can.

H. M.

REVIEWS

HODGSON'S POEMS


There is a certain picture-book quality about the poems of Ralph Hodgson. One has the feeling that they were meant to go with illustrations. Eve, for instance, seems to call for one of those rather mild drawings of the "eternal maid" such as one finds in Life. (I don't know who makes these illustrations, no doubt pleasing to clergymen and children, but apparently each generation supplies its quota and the ranks are never empty.)

Eve, with her basket, was
Deep in the bells and grass,

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Wading in bells and grass
Up to her knees,
Picking a dish of sweet
Berries and plums to eat,
Down in the bells and grass
Under the trees.

Even that much praised poem, The Bull, seems to have been destined for pictorial accompaniment. It is in itself pictorial—not imagistic; two very distinct things:

See an old unhappy bull,
Sick in soul and body both,
Slouching in the undergrowth
Of the forest beautiful;
Banished from the herd he led,
Bulls and cows a thousand head.

This poem gives the impression of a literary performance surprisingly well brought off; it has the accent of literary success. But whenever I read it I am somehow reminded of an amusing parallel in the cowboy song of The Last Longhorn:

An ancient long-horned bovine
Lay dying by the river;
There was lack of vegetation
And the cold winds made him shiver.
A cowboy sat beside him
With sadness in his face
To see his final passing—
This last of a noble race.

The ancient eunuch struggled
And raised his shaking head,
Saying, "I care not to linger
When all my friends are dead.
These Jerseys and these Holsteins
They are no friends of mine;
They belong to the nobility
Who live across the brine."
Perhaps this has no literary quality. Certainly Mr. Hodgson's poem has no lack of it. *The Bull* is picturesquely decorative, with an element of the bizarre, a suspicion of the studied properties of modern art or stage decoration:

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And things abominable sit
Picking offal buck or swine;
On the mess and over it
Burnished flies and beetles shine,
And spiders big as bladders lie
Under hemlocks ten foot high.
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And a dotted serpent curled
Round and round and round a tree,
Reducing its greenery,
Keeps a watch on all the world—
All the world and this old bull
In the forest beautiful.
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From this, the style descends quite obviously to that of the nursery picture-book:

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And his little frame grew stout,
And his little legs grew strong,
And the way was not so long;
And his little horns came out,
And he played at butting trees
And boulder-stones and tortoises. . . .
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Some of Mr. Hodgson's shorter poems have the charm of a thing that seems to occur with the ease and carelessness of a wayside flower. If in some of these one may detect the accent of William Blake it does not greatly matter, since they have also a life of their own. What does matter is that, except in these, Mr. Hodgson seems to give us so little that is himself; that so good a craftsman as he is said to be should awaken in us no more than a passing admiration of his skill of craft, of a facility which has no indication of basic growth.

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He is at his best in the very short poems, such as *The Mystery*, *Stupidity Street*, *The Bells of Heaven*, or *Reason Has Moons*; and in the shorter ballads which are simply ballads, such as *Time You Old Gipsy Man* or *The Gipsy Girl*. His most marked characteristic is a sense of the crime against the freedom of all living things; one might speak of it as a “social sense,” but it is more individualistic, more concrete, than that. As an instance of the influence of contemporary poets one upon the other, it may be remarked that had *The House Across the Way* been included in Walter de la Mare’s collection of poems, one would never have suspected that it was not his. It has precisely that atmosphere of suggested mystery noted as essentially characteristic of Mr. de la Mare’s work. And is there not also in Mr. de la Mare’s work something of that picture-book quality which one finds in Mr. Hodgson’s?

A. C. H.

FOUR YOUNG POETS

*Asphalt*, by Orrick Johns. Alfred A. Knopf.

Of a beauty exquisite and rare are some of the poems in this book. I speak less of those smelling of Bowery asphalt, which open the volume, than of certain *Country Rhymes*, poems of *Old Youth*, and lyrics of love and death.

We all remember how Mr. Johns leaped into fame by winning the first prize in the *Lyric Year* contest of five years ago. The prize poem, *Second Avenue*, is, however, one of the least interesting entries in the book, in spite of a few fine lines. We may imagine with what a wry face
the author reprinted it, now that he has outgrown its preachy tone. Probably it was Ezra Pound's taut style that gave Mr. Johns his first jolt out of the Gray's-Elegy attitude; at any rate the Songs of Deliverance, which POETRY printed in February, 1914, were the first evidence of the change. The very spirit of arrogant and rebellious youth is in that poem for me; perhaps the poet omitted it from his first book because he has become more reconciled to everyday life—or maybe he thought its manner too Ezra-Poundish. Anyway he struck for freedom with it and since then he has been himself.

Most of the poems in this book are in rhyme. Those in Bowery dialect grouped as Asphalt have a bitter tang, but they strike me as made; one feels the tools—they are not quite spontaneous. Perhaps the last one, Hunger, is the best, with this for a refrain:

Hunger, is it hunger?
   It's hunger widout end;
   It's hunger fer a decent word
   An' hunger fer a friend;
   It's hunger fer a gal ya like,
   Er hunger fer yer bread—
   Gawd o' mighty help yer, bo,
   It's hunger til yer dead.

In the songs done in his own language Mr. Johns' lyric passion has a freer range. He finds the beauty of life in common "little things," and his ribald wit delights in taking a wicked nip out of human pride. Indeed, he has a profound, a somewhat Rabelaisian, sense of humor; he discerns the grotesqueness of life—queer dust-whorls creeping over a
whirling planet—and for him human beings have little higher claim to dignity than their kin the beasts. Thus there is no nature-faking in his delight in animals and other out-door lives. Every dog he phrases is absolutely and indestructibly an individual dog, not sentimentalized or humanized; and the tree, or the tree-toad under it, live by their own right, without permission of man.

The old gray cocks
Are prouder than a king;
And even when they scratch
It's a dignified thing.

I wish there were space to quote a number of poems in order to show with what a light touch this poet expresses the very sharpest edge of feeling. If man is a grotesque, a weird experiment, then his poignant sorrow, his exquisite joy, are the final proof that something beautiful has been achieved, that a new glaze of rare and unforeseen color has come out of the fire. Mr. Johns makes us feel this ineffable beauty: in *E Poi Vidi Venir da Lungi Amore*, which is a woman's perfumed breath of sighs for love's fragmentariness; in *The Coronal of Dust* and other songs for the dead; in *The Door* with its sense of life's fragility and wonder; and in the wounding sharpness of this perfect lyric, *The Answer*:

"Crying cranes and wheeling crows—
   I'll remember them," she said;
"And I will be your own, God knows,
   And the sin be on my head.

"I will be your own and glad;
Lovers would be fools to care
How a thing is good or bad
When the sky is everywhere."
"I will be your own," she said,
"Because your voice is like the rain,
And your kiss is wine and bread
Better than my father's grain."

So I took her where she spoke,
Breasts of snow and burning mouth
Crying cranes and drifting smoke
And the blackbirds wheeling south.

H. M.

Streets and Faces, by Scudder Middleton. The Little Book Publisher, Arlington, N. J.

It is not often that a first book of verse creates an impression of selection and reserve as definite as that occasioned by this small volume. To be true, not all the poems achieve the same level of excellence. Mr. Middleton's style is in process of formation, it is not the developed style of an older man; but it has indications of individuality. When I say this I am thinking of the poems that are most individual—Arophe, The Stranger, The Heavenly Intrigue, Interlude and others—not of those poems which may be said to belong to a class, that of the "subject" poem so dearly loved by the magazines. Mr. Middleton has done very well with these, has lifted them above the ruck; still, poems like The Wax Museum for Men, or The Waiting Woman, do definitely belong to this class and it is a genre hard to reconcile with poetry. I should like to see the poet discard it.

Mr. Middleton has absorbed of the "new movement" some of its best qualities instead of its worst as so many others have done. His "free verse" is by no means "loose" and it does not record an observation of life purely stenographic. To An Old Couple is one of the best in this form:

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The years unravel the designs of youth,
Yet time brings at the last
The serene illusion of accomplishment.
When your two wrinkled hands meet in the night—
You know that all is well.

It is this subtle perception of experience that gives life to this poet's work. One finds it in The Clerk, where the released worker can still do nothing but go on counting up figures in Heaven: and one finds it in an unusual degree in that truly remarkable little poem called Children. This is by all means the finest poem in the book. Not that it has the perfection of Keats' odes or Shelley's songs; it may not have the rounded, final perfection of art, but it has the frailty of earth-passion about it, and it is very delicately expressed.

A. C. H.

Swords for Life, by Irene Rutherford McLeod. B. W. Huebsch.

This second book by the young author of Songs to Save a Soul strengthens the first impression that she is a poet of unusual promise. In both little volumes are strains of the lyric cry of youth, fainter perhaps in the second than the first, but in both authentic—the cry of a free spirit, full of love and fire.

She should beware of certain temptations, however. On the accommodating slip-cover the London Times calls this book "an advance" over the other, because "there is less in it of the mere recording of moods; there is now conviction and purpose behind most of the poems." Of some of them that is unfortunately true—the first one, for example, with its
Yours not to falter and shrink!
Yours not to shelter away!

which almost persuades one to read no more. A girl poet of twenty or less is entitled to moods, but conviction and purpose are dangerous things in her inexperienced hands. They lead her to exclamatory advice, preaching and other banalities.

Spring and a Larch Wood has in it the joy of discovering beauty in the wood:

I dared not breathe nor look nor stir
I was so hushed in holiness.
I was so strangely close to her
I dared not move to touch her dress—
I was so bound in quietness.
The hoyden wind, abashed like me,
And sunk in piteous surprise,
Crept to her very wistfully,
Kissing her golden-lidded eyes
With little mournful gusty sighs.

The brief lyrics in this book are not quite so good as two or three in the earlier volume; but this, part of Love's Guard, is very delicate:

When first I awake,
Half seeing, half dreaming,
Morning shadows take
Shape and life-seeming.

A little sweet ghost
Calls me, enchants me;
He and his bright host
Of memories haunts me.

His hand seeks my face
Like little leaves falling.
There is no quiet place
Where he is not calling.
It is not well with thee,
O my darling!
It is not well with thee,
My little darling!

H. M.

The Dance of Youth, by Julia Cooley. Sherman, French & Co.

One is softly moved by this book because of its girlishness. It is so solemn, so thoughtful, so burdened with knowledge and experience, and yet withal so young and ignorant. We have the typical educated American girl—talented moreover in this case—who has been typically protected and withdrawn, and who is piteously fumbling for life and art through the fuzzy cottonwool of conventionalities. She has in her the makings of both woman and poet, but one feels the blur of self-consciousness getting in the way of both. She would give herself away, as woman and poet must, but, unconsciously and in spite of herself, a thousand tendencies of her blood and breeding—all the nice-girl niceties that tend to make a perfect lady of her—get in the way of the gift and she can't break through. Not yet at least. Life may break a way for her of course, if it dashes her on the rocks and tears her to pieces. But the trouble is, in many of these cases life also acts like a lady and holds aloof. Life seems daunted by the smooth undaunted front these girls put up—it would be too cruel a task to break them on the wheel, even though they say,

Smite, Life, that I may know you well!

The makings of a poet—yes, but most of this first book should go into the discard. When the poet is made, if that

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day comes, she will find the proudest efforts of her maiden volume stiff and formal and painstaking, and will bless the muses that a few escape this blight. The title poem escapes it by a hair's breadth—a happy miracle, because the poem has a delicate tune of its own. Here is a third of it:

Lai's and Thai's have gone from the noon,
And Berenice bloomed of yore.
Lesbia whitens beneath the moon
And Sappho sings no more.

A shadow lurks in the Milky Way,
And behind the moon is Death.
Dance, oh, dance, till the night is gray
And the dew is a shuddering breath.

Ye are Lai's and Thai's now,
Ye are the fruit of the hour.
Sway we and sing like a summer bough
Till another youth shall flower!

In Spring Sorrow is another soft fine tune, and a few brief and simple poems show a delicate touch—She Bends above a Flower, Magic Moonlight, Success, Futility. And there is a bit of cosmic irony in The Anthem. H. M.

A POET'S UPBRINGING


Soberly and lucidly Mr. Yeats sets down in these pages his reveries, ending at the threshold of his creative period. Then there is a postscript wherein the poet says:

For some months now I have lived with my youth and childhood—not always writing indeed, but thinking of it almost every day; and I am sorrowful and disturbed. It is not that I have accom-
pushed too few of my plans, for I am not ambitious; but when I think of all the books I've read, and of all the wise words I have heard spoken, and of the anxiety I have given to parents and grandparents and of the hopes I have had—all life, weighed in the scales of my own life, seems to me to be a preparation for something that never happens.

And so the reveries end in the gray mood. One might read them and not be aware that they were about a great creative artist. Indeed, if the names had been suppressed one would say that a cultivated man, who had met many cultivated people, and who had formed some challenging judgments, was the subject of the memoir. "I saw God with his face pressed against the window," says William Blake; "that was when I was about six years of age." Mr. Yeats tells us nothing of his majestic visitants—though surely an archangel must have looked through his windows!

How he rose to the poet within him, and how he made himself a national poet—these are what we look to the memoir to reveal, but the author has not chosen to let us feel the throb of such great experiences.

Mr. Yeats had a fair place for his early upbringing—a beautiful county in the west of Ireland. His grandfather was a stormy old man who had been the captain and owner of a merchant ship. He was fortunate in his father, John B. Yeats, the painter, who has one of the most disinterested minds of his day. For him freedom in life and creation in art are all in all. A comrade to his son, he taught him to dislike all that was abstract and merely reflective in art.

The poet joined one of the patriotic literary societies in Ireland. Once, reading aloud some poem to their company,
he discovered that although it was written in vague abstract words such as one finds in a newspaper, it had power to move them to tears. It was a poem describing the shore of Ireland as seen by a returning emigrant. He thought that the poem moved them because it contained the actual thought of a man at a passionate moment of life, and so he became interested in the thought of a poetry that would be a personal utterance.

It was his friendship with the Irish political leader John O'Leary that made him resolve to be one of the creators of a national literature for Ireland. He thought that the Irish and the Anglo-Irish might be brought together if the country had a national literature that would make Ireland beautiful in memory, and yet be freed from provincialism by an exacting criticism. He tells us of the difficulties and discouragements that grew up as he went on with his task. He seems to be unaware that his idea and his work have now a unique flowering.

Besides his father and his grandfather, the two figures that are most notably shown are the Fenian leader John O'Leary and the courtly scholar Edward Dowden: O'Leary, whom the poet celebrated afterwards in a ballad; and, for a contrast, Professor Dowden with his dark romantic face and his ironic manner—Dowden, who might have been a poet if he had once yielded himself to life, but who became a critic instead. John B. Yeats said of him, "Talking to Dowden is like talking to a priest—one must be careful not to remind him of his sacrifice." The famous scholar was helpful to
the young poet, but it was Dowden's poems that made him consider the whole question of lyric poetry. He says:

I was about to learn that if a man is to write lyric poetry he must be shaped by nature and art to one of the half-a-dozen traditional poses, and be lover or saint, sage or sensualist, or mere mocker of all life; and that none but that stroke of luckless luck can open before him the accumulated expression of the world.

P. C.

CORRESPONDENCE

A NOTE FROM MR. LINDSAY

The following letter may assist the reader's understanding of our two poems by its author:

Dear POETRY: The Soap-box is my only poem in this manner except The Kallyope Yell, written five years ago. From the words "Free speech" to the end it is to be given, like that poem, in college-yell fashion, but more musically, with the rasp of the college yell left out and its energy retained.

As for Samson—I attended a negro church with John Carpenter when I was last in Chicago, and some of the spirit of the sermons we heard went into Samson; and the process of conversion and repentance is, I hope, an honest and reverent record of what happened before us. There was not any rolling on the ground, but one woman was carried out in a cataleptic state.

After coming home I heard a negro sermon on Jerusalem whose refrain every few minutes was, "Let Jerusalem be coming into your mind." Another day I heard, amid a general exhortation, this outburst: "There was a Russian revolution yesterday, and my Lord is riding high."

I have used these phrases, I hope, in the same spirit that they were originally uttered. The fundamental difficulty of negro sermon poems of this type is that there is a profound seriousness of passion in the midst of things at which the outsider is fairly entitled to smile; and when a white man tries to render this seriousness and this humor at the same time, he is apt to be considered more of a humorist than a sermonizer. The negroes are perfectly willing to laugh a little on the way up to glory, and, unlike the white man, they do
not have to stop going up while they laugh. I should say that one-tenth of Samson has a humorous intention, but I will venture that the average reader will consider it nine-tenths humorous, through lack of familiarity with that amazing figure, the negro preacher, who is just as unique and readily at hand now as he was twenty-five years ago, when he was much more discussed and parodied.

_Vachel Lindsay_

**THE POETRY THEATRE LEAGUE**

The following letter sets forth a new project which should interest all lovers of poetry. To the modern reader this art is too much an affair of the library; he needs to be reminded that it began as an art of song and speech. Mr. Brody and his associates are trying “to win back for poetry its place among the articulate arts.”

_Dear Poetry:_ The Poetry Theatre League, 287 Fifth Avenue, New York, means to participate, in every way possible, with the renaissance now taking place in poetry, but its particular object is to establish a center for the public recitation of poetry. Just as Music is interpreted by artist-players, just as Drama is interpreted by actors and stage-directors, so Poetry is to be staged with costumes, scenic effects, or music, and interpreted by artist-reciters. In this way, by appealing to all the senses, we hope to reach an audience outside of and larger than the poetry-reading public, and thus extend the appreciation of poetry. Miss Hedwig Reicher, our Artistic Director and an actress of international reputation, has been experimenting in productions of this kind, and has demonstrated their aesthetic value and feasibility beyond a doubt.

In addition, the activities of The Poetry Theatre League will include the production of poetic plays, the arrangement of lectures on poetry, and readings by poets of their own works. In this latter way we hope to be instrumental in presenting poets whom publishers are too timid to introduce to the public. We will also encourage and endeavor to organize poetry societies in universities and settlements, and supply them with programs and lecturers.

The profits of the League will be devoted exclusively to prizes for the best poems appearing in American magazines, and for the best poetic plays submitted to us.

_Alar Brody_
THAT COWBOY POEM

Editor of Poetry: I was greatly interested in High Chin Bob, published in the August Poetry.

The original poem is entitled The Glory Trail; the author is Charles Badger Clark, Jr.; it was first published in the Pacific Monthly, April, 1911. I enclose a copy.

Seattle, Wash.

William H. Skaling

Editor's Note: On the whole, the cowboy version simplifies and improves Mr. Clark's poem, in our opinion; although, by a curious process of elimination, the revisers unconsciously deprived each double-stanza, except the last, of an entire rhythmic phrase—an entire line according to the author's way of printing the poem in short lines instead of long. The first stanza from the Pacific Monthly will serve, by comparison with our August number, to show how far the cowboy's idea of a folk poem differed from the author's:

'Way high up the Mogollons,
Among the mountain tops,
A lion cleaned a yearlin's bones
And licked his thankful chops,
When on the picture who should ride,
A-trippin' down a slope,
But High-Chin Bob, with sinful pride
And maverick-hungry rope.

"Oh, glory be to me!" says he,
"And fame's unfadin' flowers!
All meddlin' hands are far away,
I ride my good top-hawse today,
And I'm top rope of 'Lazy J'—
Hi, kitty cat, you're ours!"

GOOD-BYE TO EUNICE TIETJENS

The poem printed below may serve to emphasize the goodwill of Poetry, and its editors and readers, toward the author of the Profiles, Eunice Tietjens, who now resigns
Good-bye to Eunice Tietjens

from the staff of the magazine in order to go to France as a correspondent of the Chicago Daily News. In saying a regretful farewell to Mrs. Tietjens, we may hope that she will become also a correspondent of POETRY. Her intimate knowledge of both French and German, and her wide acquaintance among poets, may enable her to inform us now and then about conditions in the art abroad, especially in Paris. But here is the poem:

"PROFILES FROM CHINA"

This is a book fresh from the printing press and bindery. Some of the red of a woman's heart is between its covers, and it is a strong and honest book. I listen between the covers, and I hear the beggars, fakirs, scholars, ricksha runners, rice farmers and street dogs of swarming, immigable, irrepressible, stinking, going-somewhere China. It is a simple book, filled with the subtleties and drolleries of simple people, and I know boys in short pants who could read and fathom most of it.

The portent of it is like the laughter of a nut between two stones; occasionally it ejects the sneeze of a shriveled panhandler lacking an overcoat in late November, and the meaning of it will be nil to those who never enjoy the whiff of humanity in the mob. They wish for a laquer-work synthesis of the motives of a working-man's wife who has paid ten coppers for a new kitchen-god, and they protest the absence of spectric hues in the picture of a beggar picking lice off his shirt.

It is the same as looking at a wounded soldier and saying: This red blood is quite red while this other red blood is not quite so red.

Carl Sandburg

NOTES

The readers of POETRY need little information about most of the poets in this number.

Mr. Yeats' new book of poems, to be issued by the Cuala Press, Dundrum, Ireland, and the Macmillan Co., this autumn, will be
POETRY: A Magazine of Verse

entitled *Per Amica Silentiwm Lunae* (Through the Friendly Silence of the Moon); and the poet describes it as “an explanation of the religious convictions, and philosophical speculations, that I hope govern my life.” *Ego Dominus Tuus* will open this volume.

Mr. Edgar Lee Masters, of Chicago, is in danger of being absorbed by Michigan because of the beauty of his newly-acquired farm on Spring Lake. He promises to return this month, however, and to prepare a new volume for spring publication.

Mr. Lindsay’s new book now in the Macmillan Co.’s press-room will be entitled *The Chinese Nightingale and Other Poems*.

Mr. William Rose Benét has left the office of *The Century* to train for military service. In a recent letter he says: “Anything may eventuate; my own faith is that big things are in the making—a new world.”

Mr. Willard Wattles also is preparing for military service. From Lawrence, Kansas, he went in June to Peterboro, N. H., where he has been putting his poems in order before entering a training camp.

Miss Margaret Widdemer, of New York, author of *Factories with Other Lyrics*, is also well known to our readers. And Miss Eleanor Rogers Cox, though new in *POETRY*, is the author of *Singing Fire of Erin* (John Lane Co.).

Miss Helen Louise Birch, of Chicago, who is known as a composer of songs, appears for the first time as a poet.

BOOKS RECEIVED

ORIGINAL VERSE:


*In Greek Seas, and Other Poems of Travel*, by Oswald H. Harvey. John Lane.

*Poems*, by Brian Brooke (Korongo) with Foreword by M. P. Wilcox. John Lane.


*Poems*, by John Masefield (Selected). Macmillan Co.


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